WHAT IS CLAIMED IS:

1. A method of controlling an image forming apparatus comprising the steps of:

displaying an operation status message area on a first part of a touch panel display;

displaying a document counting area configured to show a number of sheets set and a number of documents produced on a second part of the touch panel display;

displaying an input document handling area on a third part of the touch panel display; and

allowing selection of at least one kind of document for image forming from the input document handling area.

2. The method as claimed in claim 1, further comprising the steps of:

displaying an output document handling area on a fourth part of the touch panel display; and

allowing selection of at least one of a sort mode, a stack mode, a staple mode, and a punch mode from the output document handling area.

3. The method as claimed in claim 2, further comprising the steps of:

displaying at least one image forming function tab; and

allowing selection of a program key to register the at least one image forming function tab.

4. The method as claimed in claim 3, further comprising the steps of:

displaying a programmable registered image forming function tab area on a fifth part of the touch panel display; and

allowing selection of at least one registered image forming function tab.

5. The method as claimed in claim 4, wherein at least the input document handling area, the operation status message area, the document counting area, the output document handling area, and the programmable registered image forming function tab area are simultaneously maintained on the touch panel display while a selection is made via the touch panel display.

6. The method as claimed in claim 1, wherein the step of displaying an image forming function tab comprises:

displaying at most ten image forming function tabs.

7. A method of controlling an image forming apparatus comprising the steps of:

displaying an operation status message area on a first part of a touch panel display;

displaying a document counting area configured to show a number of sheets set and a number of documents produced on a second part of the touch panel display;

displaying an input document handling area on a third part of the touch panel display; and

allowing selection of at least one kind of input document for image forming.

8. The method as claimed in claim 7, further comprising the steps of:

displaying an output document handling area on a fourth part of the touch panel display; and

allowing selection of at least one of a sort mode, a stack made, a staple mode, and a punch made from the output document handling area.

9. The method as claimed in claim 8, further comprising the steps of:

displaying at least one image forming function tab; and

allowing selection of a program key to register the at least one image forming function tab.

10. The method as claimed in claim 4, further comprising the steps of:

displaying a programmable registered image forming function tab area on a fifth part of the touch panel display; and

allowing selection of an automatic paper selecting function.

11. The method as Claimed in claim 10, further comprising the step of:

allowing operation in one of the five parts of the touch panel display, wherein

at least the input document handling area, the operation status message area, counting area, the output document handling area, programmable registered image forming function tab area are simultaneously maintained on the touch panel display while a selection is made via the touch panel display.

12. The method as claimed in claim 7, wherein the step of displaying an image forming function tab comprises:

displaying at most ten image forming function tabs.

13. An operation and display section of an image forming apparatus, the operation and display section having a touch screen panel comprising:

a first touch screen panel subsection configured to control input processing of a document;

a second touch screen panel subsection configured to control copy processing of the document; and

a third touch screen panel subsection configured to control output processing of the document.

14. The operation and display section as claimed in claim 13, wherein

each touch screen panel subsection includes function keys that are configured to be selected to control processing in each subsection, and

only information displayed in one of the touch screen panel subsections that includes selected function keys changes when the selected function keys are selected, while the display of the subsections not including the selected function keys are maintained on the touch screen panel.

15. The operation and display section as claimed in claim 13, wherein the first touch screen panel subsection includes input display keys configured to set document reading conditions.

16. The operation and display section as claimed in claim 13, wherein the third touch screen panel subsection includes output display keys configured to enable selection of an least one of a sort mode, a stack mode, a staple mode, and a punch mode.

17. The operation and display section as claimed in claim 13, wherein the first, second, and third touch screen panel subsection are horizontally arranged side by side on the touch screen panel in first, second and third touch screen panel order.

18. The operation and display section as claimed in claim 13, wherein the second touch screen panel subsection has a greater area than each of the first and third touch screen panel subsections.